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RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 1928
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 0036
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RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 0046
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 0202
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
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RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 0460
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 2339
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BISHKEK 000100

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KG](#)

SUBJECT: KYRGYZ GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS REFLECT ON PARTIES,
ORDER, AND GOVERNANCE

REF: BISHKEK 86

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Classified By: Amb. Marie L. Yovanovitch, Reason 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: During conversations with the Ambassador and visiting Central Asian Affairs Office Director Pamela Spratlen, Kyrgyz government officials defended the December 30 version of the constitution that restored numerous powers to the president. Presidential advisors stressed the need for "order" and "proper behavior," in place of "irresponsible democracy." Parliament's approval of a new prime minister diminished the threat that parliament would be dissolved, but some may still push for early elections. And President Bakiyev has kept up his criticism of the parliament, accusing it of inaction. End summary.

¶2. (U) The Ambassador and Central Asian Affairs Office Director Pamela Spratlen met then-Prime Minister Felix Kulov, First Deputy Prime Minister Daniyar Usenov, Parliament Speaker Marat Sultanov, State Secretary Adakham Sultanov, and Chief of the Presidential Staff Medet Sadyrkulov during Spratlen's January 21-26 visit to Kyrgyzstan for discussions of bilateral relations, as well as Kyrgyz political and economic developments.

Constitutional Upgrade) Views on Version 3.0

¶3. (C) With the exception of Kulov, interlocutors expressed support for the December version of the constitution. Although the new version stripped many of the powers parliament gained in November, Sultanov considered the December version a "stabilizing factor" that eliminated

"imperfections" in the November version. Usenov minimized the importance of the "stylistic" corrections, a stance echoed by Madumarov. Kulov, the dissenting voice, saw no "progress" in the December document, and instead favored the old constitution, most recently amended in 2003.

Political Parties) A Uniting Force?

¶4. (C) The new party list voting system outlined in the December version of the constitution received nearly unanimous endorsements. Kulov argued that political parties "will help bridge the North-South divide, and make it easier for the political elite to come to agreement." Sadyrkulov opined that there is grassroots interest in political parties, as people "see this is the future." Even though the new version of the constitution splits parliamentary representation evenly between single mandate and party list seats, Sadyrkulov believed that most seats would be won on the basis of political party affiliation. President Bakiyev, in a January 27 speech, lauded the "significant democratic development" of parties taking shape in parliament.

¶5. (C) While parliament's January 29 approval of Azim Isabekov as prime minister likely diminished the threat of dissolution, there may still be pressure for early elections. In his January 24 comments, Sultanov cautioned that parties not currently represented in the parliament, such as Ar Namys (Kulov-aligned) and Jany Kyrgyzstan (pro-Bakiyev), might continue to agitate for new parliamentary elections.

Give People What They Want) Order

¶6. (C) Madumarov claimed that most Kyrgyz outside of Bishkek
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were not attuned to political developments, and simply wanted discipline and public order. As a result, he argued, the majority of Kyrgyz supported "strong presidential power." Madumarov, reflecting on the lively Kyrgyz protest culture, said it was time "to introduce responsibility) democracy without responsibility turns into anarchy." In a similar vein, Usenov, while highlighting the "ideal" state of freedoms in Kyrgyzstan, advocated a need for "balance and behavioral standards." As an example of the new order, Usenov noted that MP Omurbek Babanov, a leader of the November protests, was "behaving now" and was "being treated fairly." (Note: Under pressure, Babanov recently sold his stake in television station NTS, and has maintained a low profile since November. End note.)

You Don't Work for Kyrgyzstan, Kyrgyzstan Works for You

¶7. (C) In an hour-long address to a Kyrgyz business convention January 27, President Kurmanbek Bakiyev ridiculed Parliament and criticized the (Kulov-led) government for failing to aid businessmen and agree on economic reforms. He vowed, under the approving eye of uber-businessman Usenov, to remove any government official blocking the path of business and commerce. Parliamentarians, Bakiyev noted, lacked practical work experience, failed to pass critical legislation regarding the power sector, specifically the Kumbarata hydroelectric stations, and "needed to work." He chastised ministers for taking three years, and counting, to revise the tax code, when it "only takes nine months to make a baby." The new government, Bakiyev predicted, would herald a "new era of dynamism" amounting to 100 times the Kulov-led government's level of activity. Parliamentarians seated behind emboff chuckled at Bakiyev's advocacy of reform, asking what efforts at reform he has taken since coming to power.

Comment

18. (C) During our meetings, the President's advisors seemed satisfied with the course of political developments in Kyrgyzstan. And why not? Over the past month, Bakiyev has managed to regain the powers he ceded in November, gotten rid of his chief competitor, the Prime Minister, and -- at least temporarily -- outmaneuvered parliament. Bakiyev appears to be trying to keep parliamentarians where he wants them: with the imminent threat of parliamentary dissolution and early elections fading with the agreement on Isabekov's appointment, the President's attacks on parliament may be an effort to keep parliamentarians at bay. The rhetoric, and continuing pressure on opposition politicians as suggested by Usenov's comments about Babanov and numerous other cases observed by Embassy, are troubling and worth watching.

19. (C) Kulov's belief that political parties can bridge the North-South divide may run into obstacles. Unless implementing legislation (due by the end of June) or party platforms mandate nationwide membership in political parties, political parties may simply reflect the existing divide. However, given Kulov's reported bitterness about his ouster, the political party structure could strengthen whatever activities he wishes to pursue now that his "tandem" relationship with Bakiyev is shattered.
YOVANOVITCH